



Follow Up to Comments About Entrainment Monitoring Study Plan

joe.p.smith to: Isaac Chen

11/23/2009 10:12 AM

Cc: Willie Lane, steve.e.little, robert.kuehn, gkorenaga

Issac

Thanks for taking the time to clarify your comment about the potential for fish congregating in the cooling water discharge plume to have enhanced potential for entrainment. We will address this issue along with our responses to your other comments.

I understand that you will be assuming additional responsibilities as the NPDES permit writer for the General Permit. We would like to maintain good communications with Region 6 on matters concerning this permit. Robert Kuehn of Shell (robert.kuehn@shell.com , 504 728 7693) and Steve Little of ExxonMobil (281-654-1015 steve.e.little@exxonmobil.com) are co-chairs of the Offshore Operators Committee (OOC) Environmental Subcommittee and should be considered the industry contacts for permit-related issues.

Beyond my involvement in the cooling water matter we are currently discussing, I also serve as the co-chair for the OOC Environmental Sciences Subcommittee along with co-chair Gail Korenaga of Chevron (510-242-9281 gkorenaga@chevrontexaco.com). We are the contacts for information about scientific studies that the industry has done or will need to do related to permit requirements. Please contact me or Gail if we can assist with any questions or information needs related to these studies.

Best regards,

Joe Smith

Phone 713 431 4532

Fax 713 431 6387

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To
joe.p.smith@exxonmobil.com
cc
11/13/2009
03:15 PM Chen.Isaac@epamail.epa.gov
Subject
Re: Request for Formal Response to
Industry-wide Entrainment Study Plan

Joe, I know this is a little later than we had hoped but please find attached our preliminary comments on the Entrainment Study Plan. As I stated in my previous e-mail we hope to have more complete set of comments by November 20th but we wanted to send these ahead so you can see some of the areas of concern. I also want to take this opportunity to let you know that Isaac Chen will be assuming the lead role for activities associated with this effort in R6. We had been using part of Brian Mueller's time for this effort, but his other duties now require his full time attention so Isaac will be assuming this role immediately. Isaac is our Regional 316(b) coordinator so the subject and requirements are certainly not new to him.

If you have any further questions concerning these comments you may contact Isaac at 214-665-7364. Or as always feel free to contact me at 214-665-8460 or by e-mail.

Willie Lane
Chief, Permits and Technical Section
EPA Region 6
Phone: 214.665.8460
Fax: 214.665.2191[attachment "EPA preliminary comments on E-study.doc"
deleted by Joe P Smith/U-Houston/ExxonMobil]

Sea Chest Screen Blockage Remediation

As all salt water service intakes feed rig critical system's the pressure is monitored across the sea chest strainer for potential blockage. The system is monitored for blockage via the differential pressure between the sea chest strainer inlet pressure gauge and the sea chest strainer outlet pressure gauge. The sea chest inlet pressure gauge reads the hydrostatic effect of the sea water and is dependent upon the actual vessel draft. As the draft of the vessel changes, the inlet pressure gauge will change accordingly assuming the sea chest screen is free from any blockage.

Ensco has preventative maintenance routines in place to monitor the above mentioned differential pressure and clean the sea chest strainer based on any change in that pressure.

If the pressure gauge on the inlet side of the sea chest strainer indicated that the sea chest screen was blocked or fouled, the following actions would be completed:

1. Shut down pump that is taking suction from the screen that is fouled.
2. Using the installed sea chest screen air blow down line, cycle air on and off in an attempt to clear the blocked screen. Each sea chest screen on the ENSCO 8502 is equipped with an air blow down line. See Figure 1 below:

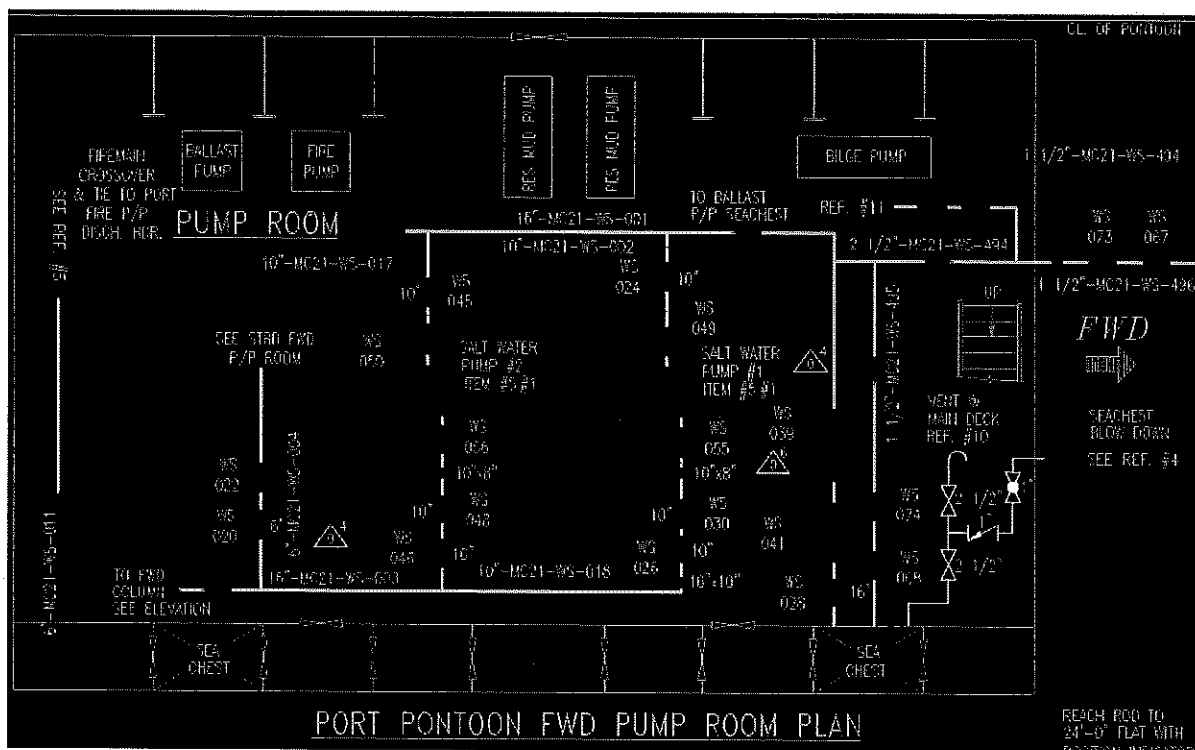


Figure 1: ENSCO 8502 Pump Room Piping Diagram

3. If the air blow down line failed to clear the blocked screen the pump in question would have to be isolated until such time that the cause of the blockage can be investigated. The main sea chest valve would be closed and the pump would be locked out / tagged out.
4. Switch to one of the redundant pumps that is in a different location (different pump room) and continue operations until such time that the rig can be de-ballasted and the cause of the blockage investigated.
5. When the well is secure and the rig can disconnect the BOP stack from the sea floor investigate and rectify the cause of the blockage with either divers or ROV. ROV would be the preferred method due to the inherent risk associated with offshore diving operations.

construct a meteorological tower and associated structures on its leasehold (equivalent to structures and devices requiring SAP approval). BOEMRE is requesting comment on the reasonably foreseeable environmental effects associated with issuing a commercial lease in this area and with the lessee conducting additional site characterization activities on such a lease.

Maryland: The proposed area offshore Maryland is made up of 29 whole OCS blocks and 4 partial blocks. The entire area is approximately 207 square nautical miles; 175,069 acres; or 70,848 hectares. The western edge is approximately 10 nautical miles from the Ocean City, Maryland coast, and the eastern edge is approximately 27 nautical miles from the Ocean City, Maryland coast.

Virginia: The proposed area offshore Virginia is made up of 22 OCS lease blocks and 5 partial blocks. The Western edge of the area is approximately 20 nautical miles from Virginia Beach, and the Eastern edge is approximately 37 nautical miles from Virginia Beach. The entire area is approximately 165 square nautical miles; 139,855 acres; or 56,597 hectares.

A map of the WEAs described above is available on the BOEMRE website at <http://www.boemre.gov/offshore/RenewableEnergy/>. In 2010, BOEMRE began publishing Requests for Interest and Calls for Information for the areas above pursuant to 30 CFR 285.210–211 of the Competitive Lease Process. As a result of comments received on these notices and the analysis in the Regional EA, the WEAs offshore New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia may be further refined or modified. In addition, it may become appropriate to analyze one or more WEAs in separate EAs.

4. Cooperating Agencies

BOEMRE invites other Federal agencies and State, tribal, and local governments to consider becoming cooperating agencies in the preparation of the Regional EA. The Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA define cooperating agencies as those with "jurisdiction by law or special expertise" (40 CFR 1508.5). Potential cooperating agencies should consider their authority and capacity to assume the responsibilities of a cooperating agency and to remember that an agency's role in the environmental analysis neither enlarges nor diminishes the final decisionmaking authority of any other agency involved in the NEPA process.

Upon request, BOEMRE will provide potential cooperating agencies with a draft Memorandum of Agreement that includes a schedule with critical action dates and milestones, mutual responsibilities, designated points of contact, and expectations for handling predecisional information. Agencies should also consider the "Factors for Determining Cooperating Agency Status" in Attachment 1 to CEQ's January 30, 2002, Memorandum for the Heads of Federal Agencies: Cooperating Agencies in Implementing the Procedural Requirements of the NEPA. A copy of this document is available at <http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/regs/cooperating/cooperatingagenciesmemorandum.html> and <http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/regs/cooperating/cooperatingagencymemofactors.html>.

BOEMRE, as the lead agency, will not provide financial assistance to cooperating agencies. Even if an organization is not a cooperating agency, opportunities will exist to provide information and comments to BOEMRE during the normal public input phases of the NEPA/EA process.

5. Comments

Federal, state, local government agencies, Tribal governments, and other interested parties are requested to send their written comments on BOEMRE's scoping of the Regional EA (including important issues, alternatives related to lease issuance, and site assessment activities that should be addressed) in one of the following ways:

1. *Electronically:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the entry titled "Enter Keyword or ID," enter BOEM-2010-0077, then click search. Follow the instructions to submit public comments and view supporting and related materials available for this document.

2. *In written form, delivered by hand or by mail, enclosed in an envelope labeled "Comments on Mid Atlantic WEA Regional EA" to Program Manager, Office of Offshore Alternative Energy Programs (MS 4090), Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement, 381 Elden Street, Herndon, Virginia 20170. Comments should be submitted no later than March 11, 2011.*

Dated: January 27, 2011,

L. Renee Orr,

Acting Associate Director for Offshore Energy and Minerals Management.

[FR Doc. 2011-2774 Filed 2-8-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-MR-W-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement

Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), Western and Central Planning Areas of the Gulf of Mexico (GOM), Oil and Gas Lease Sales for 2012–2017

AGENCY: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE), Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Notice of Scoping Meetings.

1. Authority

This Notice of Intent (NOI) and notice of scoping meetings is published pursuant to the regulations (40 CFR 1501.7) implementing the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.* (1988)).

2. Purpose of Notice of Intent

Pursuant to the regulations implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA, BOEMRE is announcing its intent to prepare an EIS on the 2012–2017 oil and gas leasing proposals in the Western and Central Planning Areas of the GOM, off the States of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. The NOI also serves to announce the scoping process for this EIS. Throughout the scoping process, Federal, State, and local government agencies, and other interested parties have the opportunity to aid BOEMRE in determining the significant issues and alternatives to be analyzed in the EIS. BOEMRE will use and coordinate the NEPA commenting process to satisfy the public involvement process for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f), as provided for in 36 CFR 800.2(d)(3).

The EIS analysis will focus on the potential environmental effects of oil and natural gas leasing, exploration, development, and production in the areas identified through the Area Identification Procedure as the proposed lease sale areas. In addition to the no action alternative (*i.e.*, cancel the sale), other alternatives may be considered for each sale such as deferring certain areas from the proposed lease sales.

BOEMRE is also preparing a Programmatic EIS on the 5-Year OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2012–2017 in the draft proposed Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program: 2012–2017 (See FR Vol. 75, No. 63, Page 16828, April 2, 2010). BOEMRE is combining scoping meetings for the Programmatic and Gulf

of Mexico Multisale EISs in Houston, Texas; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Mobile, Alabama. Information concerning the Leasing Program and Programmatic EIS can be accessed at: <http://www.BOEMRE.gov/5-year/>.

3. Supplemental Information

Federal regulations allow for several proposals to be analyzed in one EIS (40 CFR 1502.4). Since each sale proposal and projected activities are very similar each year for each sale area, BOEMRE is proposing to prepare a single EIS (Multisale EIS) for the several Western and Central Planning Areas lease sales to be held annually, scheduled for 2012–2017. The Multisale EIS approach allows for subsequent NEPA analysis to focus on changes in the proposed sales and on new issues and information. The Multisale EIS will eliminate the repetitive issuance of draft and final EISs for each sale area. The resource estimates and scenario information for the EIS analyses will be presented as a range that would encompass the resources and activities estimated for any of the 10 proposed lease sales. No final decision will be made until the end of the EIS process to allow for full consultation with Federal agencies, affected States, and the public. At the completion of this EIS process, BOEMRE will make decisions only for the first proposed sale in each sale area, scheduled to be held in 2012 (Western) and 2013 (Central). Subsequent to these first sales, BOEMRE will complete the NEPA process for each of the other proposed lease sales in the 2012–2017 Leasing Program. Formal consultation with other Federal agencies, affected States, and the public will be carried out to assist in the determination of whether or not the information and analyses in the original Multisale EIS are still valid. These consultations and NEPA reviews will be completed before decisions are made on the subsequent sales. For more information on the proposed sales or the Multisale EIS, you may contact Mr. Gary D. Goeke, Chief, Environmental Assessment Section, Leasing and Environment (Mail Stop 5410), Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123–2394 or e-mail MultisaleEIS@BOEMRE.gov. You may also contact Mr. Goeke by telephone at (504) 736–3233.

4. Cooperating Agency

BOEMRE invites other Federal agencies and State, tribal, and local governments to consider becoming cooperating agencies in the preparation

of the Multisale EIS. We invite qualified government entities to inquire about cooperating agency status for the EIS. Following the guidelines from the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), qualified agencies and governments are those with “jurisdiction by law or special expertise.” Potential cooperating agencies should consider their authority and capacity to assume the responsibilities of a cooperating agency and remember that an agency’s role in the environmental analysis neither enlarges nor diminishes the final decisionmaking authority of any other agency involved in the NEPA process. Upon request, BOEMRE will provide potential cooperating agencies with a written summary of ground rules for cooperating agencies, including time schedules and critical action dates, milestones, responsibilities, scope and detail of cooperating agencies’ contributions, and availability of predecisional information. BOEMRE anticipates this summary will form the basis for a Memorandum of Agreement between BOEMRE and each cooperating agency. Agencies should also consider the “Factors for Determining Cooperating Agency Status” in Attachment 1 to CEQ’s January 30, 2002, Memorandum for the Heads of Federal Agencies: Cooperating Agencies in Implementing the Procedural Requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. A copy of this document is available at: [http://nepa.fhwa.dot.gov/ReNEPA/ReNEPA.nsf/All+Documents/D155918ABFA4EB3A85256BF20071E9AE/\\$FILE/Cooperating%20Agencies%20Memorandum.1.30.02.doc](http://nepa.fhwa.dot.gov/ReNEPA/ReNEPA.nsf/All+Documents/D155918ABFA4EB3A85256BF20071E9AE/$FILE/Cooperating%20Agencies%20Memorandum.1.30.02.doc) and [http://nepa.fhwa.dot.gov/ReNEPA/ReNEPA.nsf/All+Documents/D155918ABFA4EB3A85256BF20071E9AE/\\$FILE/Cooperating%20Agency%20Memo%20Factors.1.30.02.doc](http://nepa.fhwa.dot.gov/ReNEPA/ReNEPA.nsf/All+Documents/D155918ABFA4EB3A85256BF20071E9AE/$FILE/Cooperating%20Agency%20Memo%20Factors.1.30.02.doc).

BOEMRE, as the lead agency, will not provide financial assistance to cooperating agencies. Even if an organization is not a cooperating agency, opportunities will exist to provide information and comments to BOEMRE during the normal public input phases of the NEPA/EIS process. If further information about cooperating agencies is needed, please contact Mr. Gary D. Goeke at (504) 736–3233.

5. Comments

Federal, State, and local government agencies, and other interested parties are requested to send their written comments on the scope of the Multisale EIS, significant issues that should be addressed, and alternatives that should

be considered one of the following three ways:

1. In written form enclosed in an envelope labeled “Comments on the Multisale EIS” and mailed (or hand carried) to Mr. Gary D. Goeke, Chief, Environmental Assessment Section, Leasing and Environment (MS 5410), Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123–2394;

2. By e-mail BOEMRE e-mail address: MultisaleEIS@BOEMRE.gov; or

3. Online at: <http://ocs5years.eis.anl.gov>.

Comments should be submitted no later than March 28, 2011.

Because BOEMRE is combining scoping meetings for the Programmatic and Gulf of Mexico Multisale EISs, interested parties are reminded that written scoping comments on the Programmatic EIS will be accepted until March 31, 2011, and may be submitted to: Mr. J. F. Bennett, Chief, Branch of Environmental Assessment, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement, 381 Elden Street, Mail Stop 4042, Herndon, Virginia 20170–4817.

6. Scoping Meetings

BOEMRE will hold scoping meetings to obtain additional comments and information regarding the scope of the Multisale EIS. The scoping meetings are scheduled as follows:

- Tuesday, February 15, 2011, Houston Airport Marriott at George Bush Intercontinental, 18700 John F. Kennedy Boulevard, Houston, Texas, 1 p.m. CST.

- Wednesday, February 16, 2011, New Orleans, Louisiana, Hilton New Orleans Airport, 901 Airline Drive, Kenner, Louisiana, 1 p.m. CST.

- Thursday, February 17, 2011, 5 Rivers—Alabama’s Delta Resource Center, 30945 Five Rivers Blvd., Spanish Fort, Alabama, 1 p.m. CST.

Dated: January 12, 2011.

L. Renee Orr,

Acting Associate Director for Offshore Energy and Minerals Management.

[FR Doc. 2011–2821 Filed 2–8–11; 8:45 am]

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